Dublin June 17. 1861

Dear Mr Mary — I wrote to you on Saturday the 15th, enclosing my note in a letter to the Standard to Wilson's care. Yesterday morning (Sunday) I came into town which I rarely do — but then turn it was on "the business of Egypt" — that is, on Chancery business — & I found your letter done from Mrs Chapman. I called on my cousin Sarah Sparrow (Thomas's brother) with the letter from his nephew, whom I don't think he was rejoiced to hear of — for it cuts off his reversionary claim of the property in the event of his two elder brothers (Thomas & Joseph) dying without a male heir. However, Jacob is a very good fellow & I am very mistaken in supposing that he is not delighted with intelligence which would charm very few. Now, as to this matter, I have done my duty, you have been very kind, you may leave it to the relations to see how Thomas will turn off. I think John Sparrow ought to have been a little more precise in telling any thing he knew as to his father's parentage. He may know nothing about it — for his father left home in a huff & never communicated with his relations who gave him no just grounds of offence. Our maternal aunts were good aunts, to him especially — & Joe was an excellent brother & did not deserve his neglect. After all, it is barely possible that another Thomas Sparrow may have left Ireland and that it is his son who is in Ohio. But this is not likely. My maternal grandfather was a Sparrow and the human Sparrow abounds nowhere else that I know of, except in the County of Wexford — the paradise of my childhood.

how we to John Brown. The idea was high Editions.
By his direction I communicated with Geo. Thompson
who asked for 2½ guineas weekly <u>while the</u>
<u>work was in progress</u>. The letter was indefinite
high & I did not like to undertake it, & then my
wife volunteered & at ~~[illegible]~~ we have had it between
us. The amount of work (which has been fluctuating
on our part) has been far greater than we at first
bargained for — however, it has been a labour of
love & we have enjoyed it thoroughly. Mr Webb set
to work by condensing Redpath's narrative, rewriting
a good deal of it as far as the affairs at Harpers
Ferry. We got a copy of a London edition of
Redpath — a very ugly & unreadable one — &
I sifted it severely — cutting out commentaries, texts,
flights, ejaculations, epithets — in short & as
much of Redpath as possible — leaving only the
facts — condensed and incorporating all the
new matter we could find in the Standard, Liberator,
& Bugle — of which I fortunately had files. Letters
of letters from Mr Kem, Tilton, Hinton, &c. proved
very useful in giving freshness, interest & pathos
to the book. Accordingly as I had 20 or 30
pages set up in slips we sent them (read & corrected)
to Miss Esther who has a delicate taste about
style & cannot endure cant, bugle flying, or
slang. She consulted the Rev. Edwin Chapman
whom Mrs Chapman knows & who is also rather
a literary dandy with more delicacy than power —
& we have also sent slips to a good critic,
a sister of Mrs Webb. I am happy to say they
have all expressed great satisfaction with our
attempt & beyond a few trifling literal corrections

have suggested almost nothing — which makes me a little vain. Nothing could make me vain — for the bare sense of the small points of character which blossom into manifestations of vanity.

The effort has been to make the book as complete a collection as we could accomplish of all that is known about Brown, so that his wonderfully noble & magnanimous character may shine out, when the load of Redpath & wordy swaggers is removed. I doubt if there be an instance, in all the range of biography in all languages, in which so truly great a man was made the victim of so execrably bad a book — so full of bookmaking, rhodomontade, & bad taste. Indeed, the chief labour has been to translate it out of Redpath into English. We have got the book into paper as bad as Brown's funeral which we took out of the Standard from his own accounts. This brings it up to page 361 of the type of the sample enclosed. There would have followed (but for Gurney's request that we should wait a while for whatever his Fairness & his Hearers may send) a chapter about 30 pages long entitled the fates of his confederates who were hanged — merely hinting at those who escaped. This we called out of the papers & have welded as well as we could into a consecutive chapter. Then came, as an appendix, a letter from Hinton respecting the Pottawattomie tragedy of the Doyles &c. — these two extracts distilled from fearfully

Emerson, Parker, & others between showing the view they took of Brown's character & enterprise — these are to follow the extracts from the letters you sent me, which my lord greatly regrets are too late to come into the Life in their proper places. But this can't be helped. I value them as showing the perfect consistency of Brown's character in public & in private — both as the father of a family & as a prisoner under sentence of death. This consistency appears in most admirable & even wonderful. It seems to me that in this particular he is almost unparalleled & certainly not surpassed.

Well, while looking over "The Echoes" for something for me to accompany the remarks of Garrison & others here, I lit upon a sermon he preached upon Brown which for fervor of language & warmth & strength of appreciation in my mind surpasses them all. Indeed I thought it so excellent — & that it raises our "old hero" to such a magnificent height (& not at all extravagantly so) that I sent the book to Mrs Estlin & Mr Chapman for their approval of some long & especially forcible extracts which I penciled & which I purpose to put into the preface, in order to warm up the readers at the outset & to prepare them to estimate Brown properly in the event of our narrative being in itself too matter of fact & cold. I have not since heard from them. In fact they have not been "time". Knowing as I do that, though "no chicken

MSB.1.6.v.15.p.164

in point of age, I am also no Englishman but have a good deal of the prejudices of my country, I don't altogether think my own judgement in such matters. To Mr Richards, for example, who is coming, I thought there was a good deal of humbug in the talk about Brown & that it was calculated unfairly to throw into the shade the services of other abolitionists. I don't think so. I think Brown a very wonderful man — far above the level of most men even of most abolitionists — & that it is a beautiful thing about the abolitionists that, notwithstanding the contumelious way he regarded them before Harper's Ferry, it was to them he was chiefly indebted for sympathy & practical help in carrying his purpose into effect. There is no bitterness about them. In their respect they are generally very noble. In this little work my design has been to make Brown chiefly before the readers, & to do nothing in the way of fine writing, & to be as economical of words as possible. Mrs Stetson's original plan I was to make it a shilling book — but this was simply impossible, having regard to printing in a legible & neat form & to the comprehension of all the facts, & letters, & other matters which go to make up a complete life of Brown — in which respects I think this will be, really more valuable, more easily read & consulted, than Redpath's.

In addition to the book Mrs Stetson has commissioned me to furnish the volume with a Preface

photographs, of which I have got a proof taken from that I am sent in. This has been done by a first rate London house; it looks very well, and will be a great lettering off to the book. I have just made an estimate of the probable expense of 1000 copies; & I think it will be about 20 cents a copy & that it will be sold for two shillings so as to cover the booksellers profit – I am sure Mrs B. would be very much satisfied if it could be made to clear itself & there is no other way in which I can see to make John Brown known as he ought to be in England. You will remember that in Redpath's book there is a special declaration that Brown autobiographical sketch is copyright. If this be so, I dont see how our little work can circulate in America as that sketch is incorporated in the very first chapter. Hitherto, up to Brown death there are 11 chapters. On the left hand page as you open the book is the heading

[4 The Life of Captain John Brown]

on the right hand side

[<u>the Private Life</u> 5]

The first heading is the same throughout. The right hand heading varies as follows

<u>Adventures in Kansas</u>. – 2 chapters
<u>Visits here England</u>.
<u>Preparing to Harper's Ferry</u>
<u>Harper's Ferry</u>
<u>The Trial</u>
<u>The Family at North Elba</u> [J. W. Higginson writes slightly altered]
<u>Letters & Letters in Prison</u>

Conversations with Mrs Brown. [Edited by J. McKinnis]
Letters written in Prison
and The Closing Scenes [a good hand McKinnis]
Fate of the Confederates
Appendix

[7]

Each of the chapters has a heading in small capitals, as in the sample enclosed.

I am making a first page about a small matter – but as Em asks for information it is only fair Em should have it.

If the book could be sold in America I have no doubt Em (I mean the Am. Ant. S.) would have as many copies as Em wants for at cost price.

Now about poor Father. I think I told Em how he got wet & had had a touch of ague a week – having been on the 16th of April & returning on the 20th. Mrs E. was in bed two of the days with headache. and since we returned home she has suffered extremely from headache & influenza. Indeed I don't know how she bears such enduring so much frustrating her health. She lives in a very very little & remarkably comfort-ably furnished house called Hereford House, Durdham Down, Bristol. The house is in a row facing a green breezy down on very high ground & fully 2½ miles from the heart of Bristol & fully a mile from Clifton. She could not be more healthfully or agreeably circumstanced as a single woman with limited means. She lives in a very easy comfortable style & in an

admirable and most beautiful charitable hostess.

Stop! I tell you how I am incommoded then present writing. My table is in a small bow window in a small library that we call "the green room", at the end of the house. This window looks out on a country garden walled in two sides — with a green hawthorn hedge on the side facing me & beyond that a field & a row of trees behind which rises the Three Rock Mountain (the highest of the Mountains to Dublin) and stands two miles in a direct line from my self to the top of it. Mrs Webb sits behind me, in fact stay, with a less word which she pulloined from the bag I brought out from town. She delights in a good word, speak she in the case all the more as her mother (a rigid old Quaker lady of 80) is gostiffing away to a friend in the parlour behind us, and would be horrified if she knew her daughter is employed. The book on Quakerism is La Becta by Thomas Hollister, a son of the famous (or infamous) Mrs Hollister who resides in Florence with her gifted son Thomas & her gifted daughter Theodosia who writes admirable letters in the London Athenaeum. The eldest of the family is Anthony, the author of Frankley Parsonage & several so many amazingly clever books. He is the only Englishman who has wrote a good word about Ireland, "The Kelly & the O'Kelly" is capital.

Cousin Bessie I also would be mightily glad to see her. Nothing would be more to my taste than a trip to America & to see my friends in Boston & Philadelphia. But I am tied by circumstances & would find it very difficult to stir. Oh! how I wish I could go.

Would do this forenoon abolitionists stand with reference to their institution with Mr Carlisle's distance from the United States are in the minds of Canadians and the Constitutional guarantees.

MS. B. 1.6 v. 15. p. 69

We are truly glad that your son has returned safe and turned from those bewitching countries. Richard sold a partner of mine in business for a year in a tolerable bad safe way. The partner however was an elderly man with a large family & he found the share he had stipulated to give R. left him too little for his own necessities & he continued to shuffle R. off, keeping about 1000 dollars that R. had for his share to be paid with interest in two years. I ~~suppose~~ submitted on the principle of making the best of a bad bargain. R. is now disengaged & is looking out for some employment – a partnership is what he wishes for. He is thoroughly well principled & reliable. I fear he is too hard to please – like many whose lives have been cast in pleasant places & who have not had to face the difficulties of life. The elder brother Alfred who is my partner and right hand man is just now gone off on a rather unusual summer trip along with some friends of his – he is I believe now in Iceland. After spending a few days visiting the Geysers they were to circumnavigate the island & as the northern point is just within the arctic circle they would see the midnight sun. It was doubtful enough that ~~[illegible]~~ when ~~[illegible]~~ he had planned this trip & paid earnest for the passage money, he made a much more important engagement having asked a young lady a little younger than himself to marry him & been promptly accepted. She belongs to a worthy respectable family who have been most cordial in their consent (with one unimportant exception) & we think he could not have made a choice more likely to increase his happiness. He is a thoroughly good young man & she is a thoroughly good young woman and so if they don't live happy that you & I may. So the old story tellers of my childhood always wound up their more cheerful narrations. This important affair is as yet a profound secret – even from uncles & aunts. We reckoned up 17 who knew it and now the many family with make 22.

I send you a Dublin paper by this post and enclose a sample slip of John Brown which I hope is no sinful smuggling. I enclose in this a letter for the Liberator which from you may view about the complaint against England. If you think it injudicious to print it, don't hand it in. The feeling in England about this American truculency consists of amusement & annoyance & a feeling that no matter what we do, America will be angry. You should see that that no matter what you and I may hope from it, there was not in any official or declared sense an ~~extend~~ entire slavery war. In the Eastern sense only they can see a return of a pro-slavery lecture for which the lecturer was lifted in Dublin. If this war be here, how would it be in England where the sympathy is only the Republicans? The enthusiasm for the Union is not confined - nor the indignation against rebellion ~~by~~ among a people who habitually glory in the rebellion of other nations. Hand I check of the mass of the people and of the better informed. I don't believe that jealousy of American society in England - the prevailing sentiment is ~~[illegible]~~ a mingled mass of ignorance, indifference, admiration of their energy, amusement at their truculency, & hearty good will towards the free states & dislike of the slave states.

I am ashamed of having written such a great long letter. I rarely write so long or shortly to any body.

Yours ever

Beatrice Webb

MS. B. 1.6 v. 15, p. 69